

6th May 2012

The crow

Good morning,

In this article, I approach the study of the suite of the first hermetic medallions of the central portal of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral.

For the beginning of the study of the facade of this cathedral read the articles:

Notre-Dame de Paris (1) [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/01/notre-dame-de-paris-0.html>]

Notre-Dame de Paris (2) [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/01/guillaume-de-machaut-messe-de-notre.html>]

Notre-Dame de Paris (3) **Notre-Dame de Paris (4)** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/01/perotinussederunt-principes-notre-dame.html>]

Notre-Dame de Paris (4) [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2010/12/notre-dame-de-paris-3.html>]

) -Dame de Paris (5) [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/11/notre-dame-de-paris-5.html>] We can observe on either side of the central portal of the cathedral two rows of six alchemical medallions which constitute a veritable **Mutus Liber** or "silent book" (See the photographs in the article **Notre Dame de Paris (4)** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2010/12/notre-dame-de-paris-3.html>])

[<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2010/12/notre-dame-de-paris-3.html>]

I follow the trail of the mysterious and no less famous Fulcanelli. This indicates that these medallions should be read in the following order: The first medallion on the far left, then the one on the far right, then the next medallion on the far left and the next on the right, and so on. suite, so that the reader approaches the central entrance of the cathedral.

The first medallion on the far left is the following:



[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-POW3fzcfzSw/T4cr6-CYU8I/AAAAAAAAA_U/LBfQbX9671E/s1600/Le+Corbeau.JPG]

Hermetic medallion "Le Corbeau" from Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral

We are therefore here at the beginning of the process of the creation of the Philosopher's Stone. The protagonist has isolated the work to black which is represented here by a **crow** (" *Caput Corvi* ") The woman who holds it on the knees symbolizes **putrefaction** . This is the first phase of the Opus. It is the phase of putrefaction where the protagonist will have to dissolve his false motivations in order to prepare the subtle (the essential desire) of the thick (the ephemeral desires)

*"Reader, you see me stretched out,
The earth covers my body.
With my soul, my mind
Gained the celestial heights.
But they didn't run away,
For the sepulcher is well closed.
They are therefore constrained by the artist
To come and renew my life.
I am like the black raven.
When the fourteenth day comes
I take back the scepter in my hand
And make my people prosper."*



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-ygmL6kPm_G4/T47kxczHwol/AAAAAAAAA_w/qArdGvVExiU/s1600/Jamsthaler++Viatorium++Nigredo.jpeg]

Jamsthaler - Viatorium spagyricum - 1623 - Nigredo

Let's look at the image above:

We see an old man lying on whose hands a **crow** is standing. This cadaverous old man represents the *mercurius senex*, that is to say the old mercury. The Raven represents the **Nigredo** or first step in the transformation of the Philosopher's Stone. The old man is lying down, that is to say from an extraverted symbolic point of view; the crow is standing, that is to say symbolically introverted. Notice that the whole is in a well-delimited sphere. Under this sphere on both sides two elements communicate: the **Fire** and the **Air** which exchange a powerful energetic current or breath of life (the *Pneuma*).

From the mouth of the old man comes the *spiritus* and the *anima* , that is to say the **Spirit** and the **Soul** . At the top we see the **Sun** on the left and the **Moon** on the right . These two stars represent, if I may say so, the most universal archetypes of contrary principles. Five stars adorn the firmament and contain the symbols of metals. From left to right: Venus, Mars, Mercury (in the center) then Jupiter. Finally, notice that the fifth star on the right is black in color and is marked on the seal of **Saturn** . The image above therefore illustrates the *mercurius senex* or old mercury which is potentially in its phase of transformation. In fact, the *mercurius senex* represents the false motivations, the obsolete functioning of the individual, the archaisms which must evolve.

It is through a symbolic death that the energies can be renewed. Like the Phoenix rising from its ashes, the old man, once autumn has passed, sees his vitality renewed in spring. Limojon de Saint-Didier writes: *"You must not ignore that our old man is our mercury, that this name suits him because he is the raw material of all metals; the Cosmopolitan says that he is their water, to which he gives the name of steel and magnet, and he adds, for a greater confirmation of what I have just discovered to you: Si undecies coit aurum cum eo, emittit suum semen, et debilitatur fere ad mortem usque; concipit chalybs, and generat filium patre clariorem.*

(That is to say: If the gold joins eleven times with it (the water), it emits its seed and is found debilitated until death; then the steel conceives and begets a son clearer than its father.)"

("Letter to the True Disciples of Hermes - the Hermetic Triumph - page 143)

Carl Gustav Jung writes: *"The raven (corvus) or the raven's head (caput corvi) is the traditional designation of the nigredo (nox, melancholia, etc.) that is to say the state of putrefactio, mortificatio, separatio, solutio, etc. This denomination can mean the part for the whole or even the "capital" part, the "principle", just like for example "caput mortuum" which originally referred to the "black" head of Osiris and later designated the "Mercury of the Philosophers" by the transition to the incorruptible state. This is how it is invoked by the anonymous author of the treatise Novum Lumen Chemicum: "O coelum nostrum! O aqua nostra et Mercurius noster! ... O caput mortuum et foeces maris nostri ... Et haec sunt aviculae Hermetis flying alis." ("O our sky! O our water and our mercury!...O dead head or faeces of our sea!...And these are the epithets of the birdie of Hermes that never rests.") This avis Hermetis is the crow of which it is said: "Et scitote quod caput artis est corvus, qui in nigredine noctis et diei claritate sine alis volat." ("And know that the essential element of art (caput artis) is the raven which flies without wings in the darkness of the night and in the light of the day.") It is a spirit never at rest, which does not sleep, the "aerial and volatile stone" (lapis aereus et volatilis), therefore a being of a contradictory nature. He is the "sky" and at the same time "the faeces of the sea". Since it is also called "water", we think of rainwater that comes from the sea and falls from the sky. In fact, the idea of clouds, rain, and dew comes up quite often in the texts, and has done so since ancient times." ("Mysterium conjunctionis" Volume 2 - Paragraph 384)*

Basil Valentin in his 1645 work *"The Last Testament"* indicates: *"Now, it is a very probable and demonstrable thing that Saturn is not only reputed by astronomical invention to be the principal regent and governor of the heavens, but also that the stone which is the balm of all the noble philosophers and of this valley of miseries, as also of this deciduous life, derives and takes its principle and its coagulation only from the black color of the planet Saturn. »*

Before continuing this little study on the Raven which approaches putrefaction in alchemy, I recommend that you read the articles **Saturn, the myth** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/11/saturne-1.html>] & **Saturn, the lead** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/11/saturne-2.html>] .



[<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-jHKpwLoH0mw/Us71rrqkrql/AAAAAAAAAHGM/bGa2sHuaAls/s1600/Frontispice+du+Myst%C3%A8re+des+Cath%C3%A9drales+-+1910+Fulcanelli.jpg>]

*Frontispiece of the Mystery of the Cathedrals
Julien Champagne / Fulcanelli - 1910*

Let's look at the image above:

Under a starry night sky, in the middle of a desert landscape, the two voices of the Great Work are represented with their instruments and their materials.

We notice a **crow** resting on a skull which represents the black work or **Nigredo**. The alchemists call the crow: "*Phoebeus ales*", that is to say the brilliant bird or the bird of Apollo, of the Sun (See the rest of the article below) The skull clearly evokes that it is a question to die symbolic like the old man dies to be reborn.

The **Sphinx** which is in the light represents the wisdom of the ancient Egyptians. Notice that he holds in his right hand a statuette of **Thoth**, the scribe of the old gods. Later the Greeks will associate Thoth with **Hermes**. It will become with the alchemists **Mercury**.



[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-4G0TlvoUM0U/T5KEgzGbFI/AAAAAAAAA_8/EnwKKogKnv4/s1600/Corbeau.jpg]

The **Raven** has a bad reputation because of its black plumage and its hoarse cry. It is a scavenger and its meat is inedible. All this made him in medieval Christian Europe an ominous animal.

According to Greek mythology the crow would have originally white plumage but its plumage would have been blackened by a curse from the God **Apollo**. Apollo was in love with the daughter of King Phlegias, Princess Coronis and he had entrusted a raven with watching over her. Princess Coronis was nevertheless seduced by the mortal Ischys and the God to punish him for his negligence dressed him in black.

In addition, the goddess **Athena** who had chosen the crow as her messenger animal replaced it because of its excessive chatter by the owl which became her emblem.



[<http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-D73OSvytSp4/T5EVoAlnj0I/AAAAAAAAABAU/z56rLS3znDI/s1600/Apollon+et+le+corbeau+-+Delphes.jpg>]

"Apollo and the Raven" - Ceramic cup (475 BC) - Delphi Museum



[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-tuSgK4xcTRQ/T5EdA_plr1I/AAAAAAAAABAc/TcimUKRdkyE/s1600/Herm%C3%A8s+et+Ath%C3%A9na.jpg]

Athena and Hermes

In the Bible, after the flood **Noah** sends the Raven from the ark to discover a new country. *"After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark and let go of the crow, which came and went waiting for the waters to dry up on the earth. Then he let go of him the dove to see if the waters had subsided on the surface of the ground."* (Jerusalem Bible - Genesis - VIII - The flood 6, 7, 8)

In the same way that after the flood men and women are threatened with extinction, for the alchemists it is when matter is putrefied that the crow has a role to play. It is also a Raven who brings bread to the prophet **Elijah** in the desert.

Indeed the word of God was addressed to Elijah in these terms: *"Go away from here, go east and hide yourself at the torrent of Kerit, which is east of the Jordan. You will drink to the torrent and I order the crows to feed you there."* (Jerusalem Bible - First Book of Kings - XVII - 3, 4) In the 3rd century a crow which also brings a double ration of bread to the hermits **Antoine and Paul** who recognize in it an action of God.



[<http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-92xgDlptKQ/T5Eosn7Pgjl/AAAAAAAABAs/SPQ8M-J7jBU/s1600/Corbeau++No%C3%A9++3.jpg>]

Noah on his ark with the dove and the raven

Bible - Genesis - VIII - The recession 6, 7, 8:

"After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark and let go of the crow, which came and went waiting for the waters to dry up on the earth. Then he let go of him the dove to see if the waters had subsided on the surface of the ground."



[[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-jMVZpw2bdno/T5ERx0MZ41I/AAAAAAAAABAM/cCgpDIBE7b0/s1600/Corbeau+++Proph%C3%A8te+Elie+++Hilander.jpg)

[jMVZpw2bdno/T5ERx0MZ41I/AAAAAAAAABAM/cCgpDIBE7b0/s1600/Corbeau+++Proph%C3%A8te+Elie+++Hilander.jpg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-jMVZpw2bdno/T5ERx0MZ41I/AAAAAAAAABAM/cCgpDIBE7b0/s1600/Corbeau+++Proph%C3%A8te+Elie+++Hilander.jpg)]

The prophet Elijah in the desert to whom the Raven brings bread

Bible - First Book of Kings - XVII - 3, 4 :

"Go from here, go east and hide at the torrent of Kerit, which is east of the Jordan. You will drink from the torrent and I command the crows to feed you there -down."



[<http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-jaYE6dJr5w/T6ZvzHC7WLI/AAAAAAAAABD0/c6WHIWEfQhI/s1600/Velasquez+-La+rencontre+entre+Saint+Antoine+et+Saint+Paul+ermite+-+1633+-+Mus%C3%A9e+du+Prado+Madrid.jpg>]

"The meeting between Saint Anthony and Saint Paul the hermit"

Diego Velázquez -1633 - Prado Museum Madrid

But what does the Raven symbol mean in alchemy?



[<http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-r0alyZ0Ny-Y/T6VYrbWLOwI/AAAAAAAAABDU/WMF39m8RhNs/s1600/Chartres+++Le+Corbeau.JPG>]

Hermetic medallion "**Le Corbeau**" from Chartres Cathedral.

William Salmon , 17th century English physician and alchemist writes: *"My son, what is born of the Raven is the beginning of this art (...) That being done, your Magisterium lives in rot, the black clouds which were in it before that he died will be changed and converted into his body. Now being remade in the manner that I have described, it dies a second time, and afterwards it receives life, as I have said.* According to **Joseph Pernety** in his dictionary the Raven :

"In terms of science Hermetic, means black matter in the time of putrefaction. So they also call it the Raven's Head, which is leprous, which must be whitened, by washing it seven times in the waters of the Jordan , like Nahaman. These are the imbibitions, sublimations, cohobations, etc. of matter, which are made of themselves in the vase by the sole regime of fire."

Arnaud de Villeneuve writes: *"Know that the head of Art is none other than the raven which flies without wings in the darkness of the night and in the clarity of the day". ("Rosarium philosophurum")*

Here is now an excerpt from **"Atalanta Fugiens"** ("Atalante Fugitive") by **Michael Maïer** (1618) : **Emblem XLII** .

"Audi loquacem vulturem, qui nequitiam te deceptit" ("Listen to the talking vulture, he is not deceiving you")

FUGA XLIII. in 5. seu 12. infrà. Contrapunetum.

Prête l'oreille au vautour qui parle :
il ne te trompe nullement

*Atalanta
fugiens.*

Montis in excelso consistit ver-
At si du è clamans, assidu è

tice vul tur, vul tur
clamans: Albus ego atq; niger.

*Hippom.
sequens.*

Montis in excelso consistit
Assidu è clamans, assidue

vertice vultur, vul tur,
clamans: Albus ego atq; ni ger.

*Pomus
morans.*

Montis in excelso con si stit, confi-
At fidu è clamans, assi du è cla-

stet vertice, vertice vultur
mans: Albus ego atq; niger.

[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-l6KWrfzwg4/T6Ub7wQ_JFI/AAAAAAAAABBg/Zf40LoQ6yUw/s1600/Michael+Ma%C3%AFe++Atalanta+Fugiens++Fugue++Embl%C3%A8me+XLII.jpeg]

The little fugue that accompanies the XLII emblem

"Occupying the top of a mountain
A vulture cries incessantly: They tell me black and white;
I'm also still yellow and red and don't lie.
It's also the crow that can fly without wings
In the dark night as well as in broad daylight.
Both will be the head of his work."



[<http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-LqJWsQFYz-Y/T6UcUYjA49I/AAAAAAAAABBo/aSeVM2gw37w/s1600/Michael+Ma%C3%AFer++Atalanta+Fugiens++Embl%C3%A8me+XLII.jpeg>]

Let's look at the illustration above:

The vulture symbolizes the Mercury of the philosophers: partly fixed (this is why it is represented with its claws firmly gripping the mountain) and partly volatile (the bird's wings are half-spread).

Born after the death of the first Mercury (*mercurius senex* or solvent, see illustration at the beginning of the article) it is killed by the fixative action of the Sulfur resulting from itself. This earlier process is symbolized by the wingless **crow** in the foreground which illustrates darkness or *Nigredo* (first stage or *night of the work*). The Suffer represents the irrational impulses in substance , what we could call the "affective body" ie the anima and therefore *in fine* l'Âme.

Remarquez enfin sur l'illustration que le corbeau se déplace de gauche à droite, c'est à dire qu'il va de l'inconscience vers la conscience.

Le vautour ou oiseau d'Hermès est au sommet du pic montagneux où se trouve la matière originel et il proclame « *Je suis le noir du blanc, et le jaune du rouge* ». Le noir, le blanc et le rouge sont les couleurs dominantes du Sujet évoluant vers la perfection de la pierre philosophale. Le haut du pic montagneux représente symboliquement le pôle introverti.

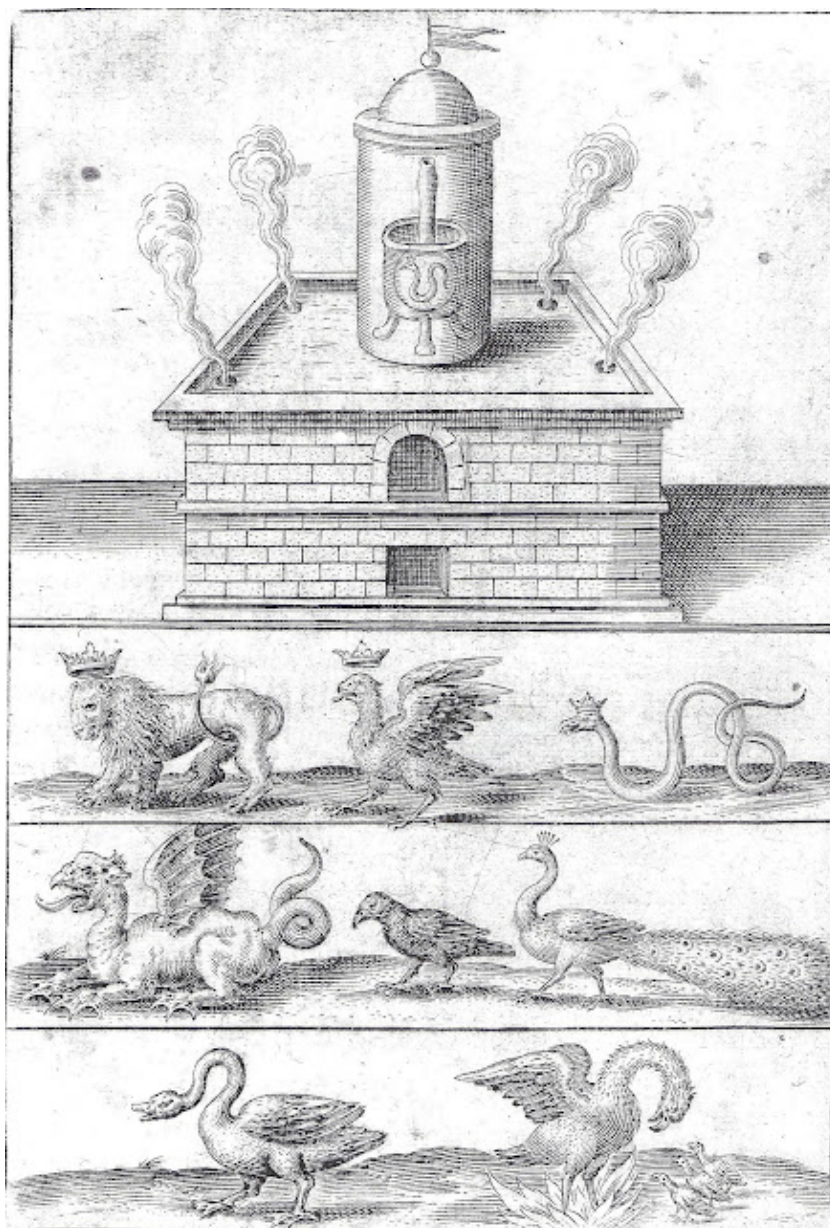
Ne perdons pas de vu que le processus de la création de la Pierre Philosophale se déroule pleinement à l'intérieur

de l'être. C'est au plus profond dans une collaboration entre l'inconscient et le conscient que l'alchimie opère.
 (Pour une étude plus approfondie sur le symbole de la montagne en alchimie, lire l'article : **La montagne alchimique** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/11/la-montagne.html>])

Ici l'aigle ne les possède pas encore véritablement les trois dernières couleurs d'une façon actuelle mais les contient "en puissance".

En effet, si **Héraclite** mentionne un processus en quatre étapes, une *quadripartition* de la philosophie, les alchimistes du XV^e et XVI^e ont ramenés le **Grand Œuvre** en trois principales phases (Noire, blanche et rouge / *Nigredo, Albedo and Rubedo*) Certain sages observed five stages: **Black, green, white, yellow and red** (the yellow stage, the Xanthosis or citrinas disappeared little by little and was only rarely mentioned.

The philosophical Mercury is carried to the degree end of perfection little by little through the maturation of the work.



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Michael Maier - Tripus aureus - 1618 - "The Athanor"

Let's look at the picture above:

We see in the upper part of the illustration an athanor ie an alchemical furnace. We can notice a snake inside which represents the Mercury of the Philosophers, that is to say, to say quickly, the unconscious. The athanor represents the inner core of the adept.

(For a more in-depth study of the Athanor, read the article: **The Athanor** [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/01/la-guerre-by-janequin-2008-prom_13.html])

Above three levels where several animals stand out. All are part of the alchemical bestiary and describe the different elements and stages of Opus ::

The **Lion** represents Fixed Sulfur

The Symbolic **Eagle** Mercury (volatile and/or dissolved)

The **Serpent** represents the mercurial solvent.

Above, the **Dragon** symbolizes the subject of Art.

The **Raven** represents the *Nigredo* (the blackness or *putrefactio*)

The **Peacock** with its tail symbolizes the range of varied colors (*omnes colores or coda pavonis* , the tail of the peacock)

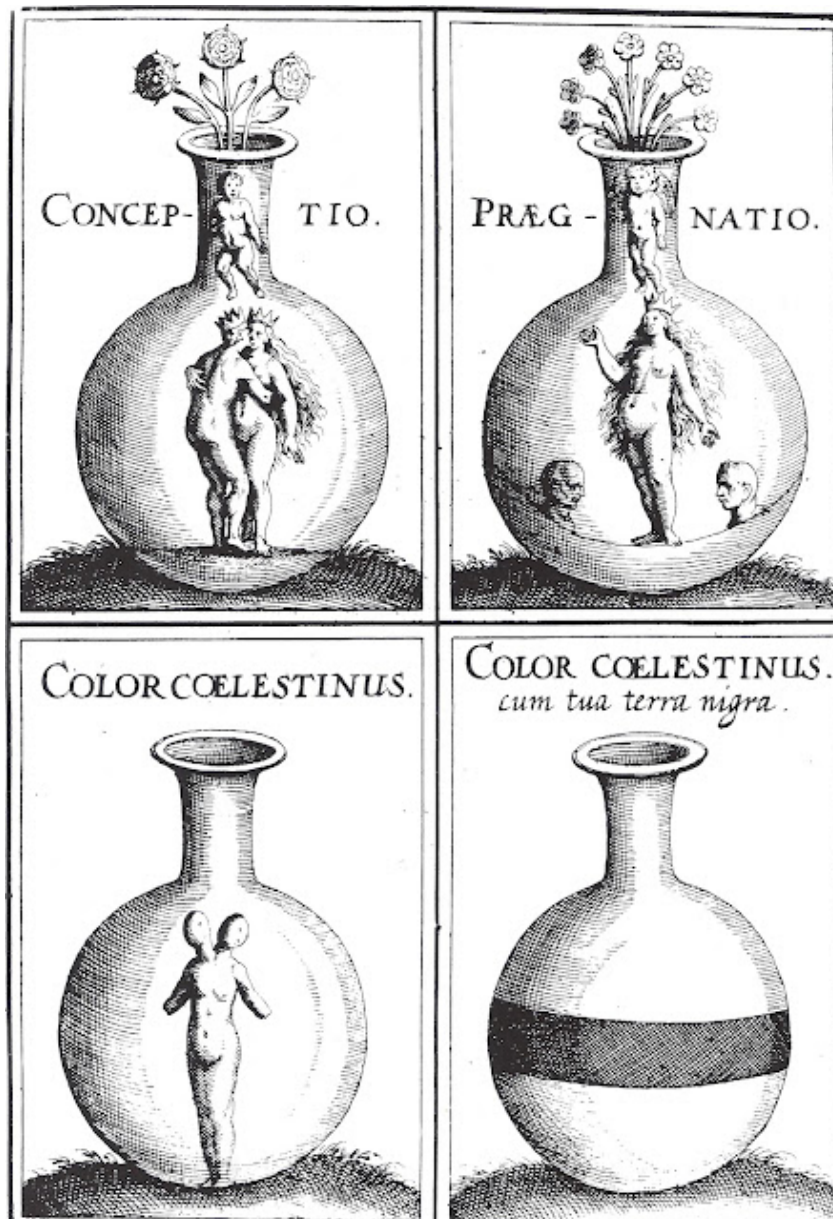
The **Swan** represents the *Albedo* or bleaching of the Stone (*albutio, baptisma*)

Finally, the **Phoenix** symbolizes the *Rubedo* or glowing Stone (*Multiplicatio* or multiplication).

when this one is no more, we have a dove which finds a dry place, because the crow did not find one, but it is one which was not there before, because in the meantime, the waters of the flood defiled the earth before and because the new earth is made of the virgin chalk of the philosophers. This dove, which is not yet completely freed from putrefaction, is transformed little by little into a phoenix which Vulcan burns in the very prison. A new fruit emerges from the ashes, rot-proof and immortal, which gives life to all sublunary things." ("Alchemy and Mysticism" - Alexander Roos - Page 288) the waters of the flood defiled the earth before and because the new earth is made of the virgin chalk of the philosophers. This dove, which is not yet completely freed from putrefaction, is transformed little by little into a phoenix which Vulcan burns in the very prison. A new fruit emerges from the ashes, rot-proof and immortal, which gives life to all sublunary things." ("Alchemy and Mysticism" - Alexander Roos - Page 288) the waters of the flood defiled the earth before and because the new earth is made of the virgin chalk of the philosophers. This dove, which is not yet completely freed from putrefaction, is transformed little by little into a phoenix which Vulcan burns in the very prison. A new fruit emerges from the ashes, rot-proof and immortal, which gives life to all sublunary things." ("Alchemy and Mysticism" - Alexander Roos - Page 288)

Carl Gustav Jung writes: *"The union of consciousness (Sol) with its feminine counterpart (Luna), has at first an undesirable result: it produces poisonous animals, like the dragon, the serpent, the scorpion, the basilisk, the toad (the salamander is an attenuated form); then come the lion, the bear, the dog, and finally the eagle (It is said of the eagle that it devours its wings or its feathers: it is therefore a reissue of the ouroboros) and the crow." ("Mysterium conjunctionis" Volume 1 - Paragraph 167)*

In order to better understand the words of Carl Gustav Jung, here below are two plates taken from the alchemical treatise *"Anatomia Auri"* (which means *"The Anatomia of Gold"*) by **Johann Daniel Mylius** published in 1628. They illustrate remarkably the advent of the stage of putrefaction and the black work or *Nigredo* represented by the Raven:



[[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-bMePEJUNK6Q/T4w3_NoDvZI/AAAAAAAAA_g/Ag5JGoM25t4/s1600/Johann+Daniel+Mylius+-+Anatomia+Auri+-+1628+-+Planche+4.jpeg)

[bMePEJUNK6Q/T4w3_NoDvZI/AAAAAAAAA_g/Ag5JGoM25t4/s1600/Johann+Daniel+Mylius+-+Anatomia+Auri+-+1628+-+Planche+4.jpeg](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-bMePEJUNK6Q/T4w3_NoDvZI/AAAAAAAAA_g/Ag5JGoM25t4/s1600/Johann+Daniel+Mylius+-+Anatomia+Auri+-+1628+-+Planche+4.jpeg)]

Johann Daniel Mylius - *Anatomia Auri* - 1628 - (Plate 4)

Let's look at the illustration above:

In the first image at the top left we see the union of opposing principles from which the winged Spirit is born (second image) There is clearly an allusion to a sexual embrace. It is through the purification of these principles that the winged spirit naturally arises from their union. This is the first volatilization of the fixed. This is the "design" .

In the second image at the top right, the female represents the Mercury which absorbs the male. It is the "praenatio" which means "pregnancy". Note the two men's heads at the bottom of the matrass or alchemical vase. The one on the left is dark and the one on the right is lighter. They represent the imagos that stand out during this stage. The winged spirit then emerges from matter (from the fixed). We must never forget that Mercury can, in modern language, be related to the unconscious.

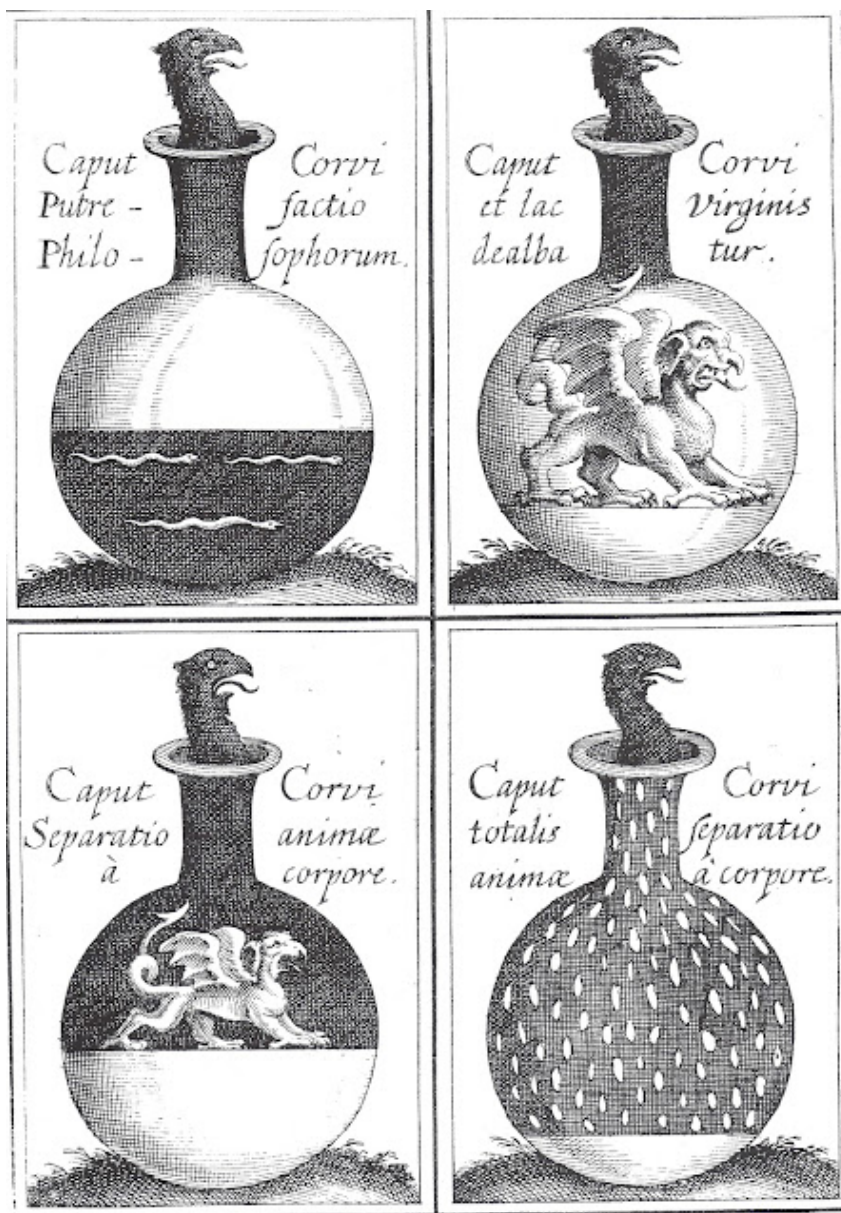
In the third image from the bottom left, appears for the first time the *Rebis* , or "androgynous of the philosophers". It is a body with two heads: female and male. This step is important in the individuation process.

Note that the Rebis has no arms here yet, ie it is still "powerless" and therefore not yet realized. This is the stage of the "*colore coelestinus*" or celestial color, that is to say midnight blue.

In the last image, bottom right, after this first production cycle, the material in the matrass is black. But the protagonist, if he is a little vigilant, has become aware of the process of union, distinction and integration of opposing principles.

In the celestial color is specified here "*Cum tua terra nigra*" which means "When your earth is black".

The second step can happen:



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[A8ZhwU_kjCo/T4xGNjFZLLI/AAAAAAAAA_o/ovPLnNSaWhc/s1600/Johann+Daniel+Mylius+-+Anatomia+Auri+-+1628+-+Planche+5.jpeg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-A8ZhwU_kjCo/T4xGNjFZLLI/AAAAAAAAA_o/ovPLnNSaWhc/s1600/Johann+Daniel+Mylius+-+Anatomia+Auri+-+1628+-+Planche+5.jpeg)

Johann Daniel Mylius - Anatomia Auri - 1628 - (Plate 5)

Let's look at the illustration above:

This is the stage of the purification of matter which is represented here by the Dragon, subject of Art.

In the first image on the top left we see a stinking black liquid whose thick and volatile vapors are extremely toxic (*Putrefactio* or putrefaction) Notice the snake larvae from which the Philosophers Dragon is born under the effect of calcination, c i.e. alchemical fire. Its larvae or little worms indicate that corruption potentially contains generation. Indeed, this "Water" or nauseating liquid which is symbolized by the Raven or " *Caput Corvi*" is

dissolved and whitened in the Matras under the effect of the Fire of the philosophers. It is, according to the texts, to decapitate the head of the Raven!

In the following image, top right, "Water" loses its black color by igneous ablutions, ie produced within the Athanor. It gradually turns white and the Dragon appears. This action must be repeated several times in order to separate the specific qualities from the superfluous ones. It is in fact a question of dissolving one's false motivations in order to prepare the subtle (the essential desire) of the thick (the ephemeral desires)

In the lower left image, we see this winged dragon again. It is white because it is cleansed by Fire and winged because it is volatile. It represents the mercury of the philosophers washed of all obscurity, purified of all filth. Notice in this matras a clear separation between the liquid at the black top and the white bottom. It is about the total separation between soul and body, between the sky (the volatile parts) and the earth (the fixed parts).



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[iHS_7S8uJwQ/T6Z5ugyYSil/AAAAAAAAABEI/XiRWcypKOQw/s1600/Van+Dyck+Anton+-+Trois+enfants+de+la+famille+de+Franchi+-+1624+-+Londres,+National+Gallery.jpeg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-iHS_7S8uJwQ/T6Z5ugyYSil/AAAAAAAAABEI/XiRWcypKOQw/s1600/Van+Dyck+Anton+-+Trois+enfants+de+la+famille+de+Franchi+-+1624+-+Londres,+National+Gallery.jpeg)]

"Three Children of Franchi's Family"

Anton Van Dyck - 1624 - London, National Gallery



[<http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-gubfZShC1Nc/UL0KmK5MNpl/AAAAAAAAACbY/rR20XblHTkw/s1600/Trois+Corbeaux.JPG>]

"Three Ravens" - Lisbon (Read the **Hare & Rabbit** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/02/lievre.html>] article)

The raven was one of the heraldic emblems of the House of Franchi. It appeared on the coat of arms of this family and is present at the bottom right of the painting.



[<http://2.bp.blogspot.com/--NGjCyhs6Xg/T6VZaAysDJI/AAAAAAAAABDc/rUISX8MswRs/s1600/Corbeau+++No%C3%A9.JPG>]

The crow sent by Noah from his ark.



[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-yBvJKQ1PwLQ/Upj5WSbF_yI/AAAAAAAAAG20/3bOxbUJmwuE/s1600/Aurora+Consurgens+-+Planche+35+-+D%C3%A9but+du+XV%C2%B0+si%C3%A8cle.jpeg]

"Aurora Consurgens" or "The rising of the dawn"
Alchemical treatise attributed to Saint Thomas Aquinas

Let's look at the image above:

Here we see the representation of the alchemical work.

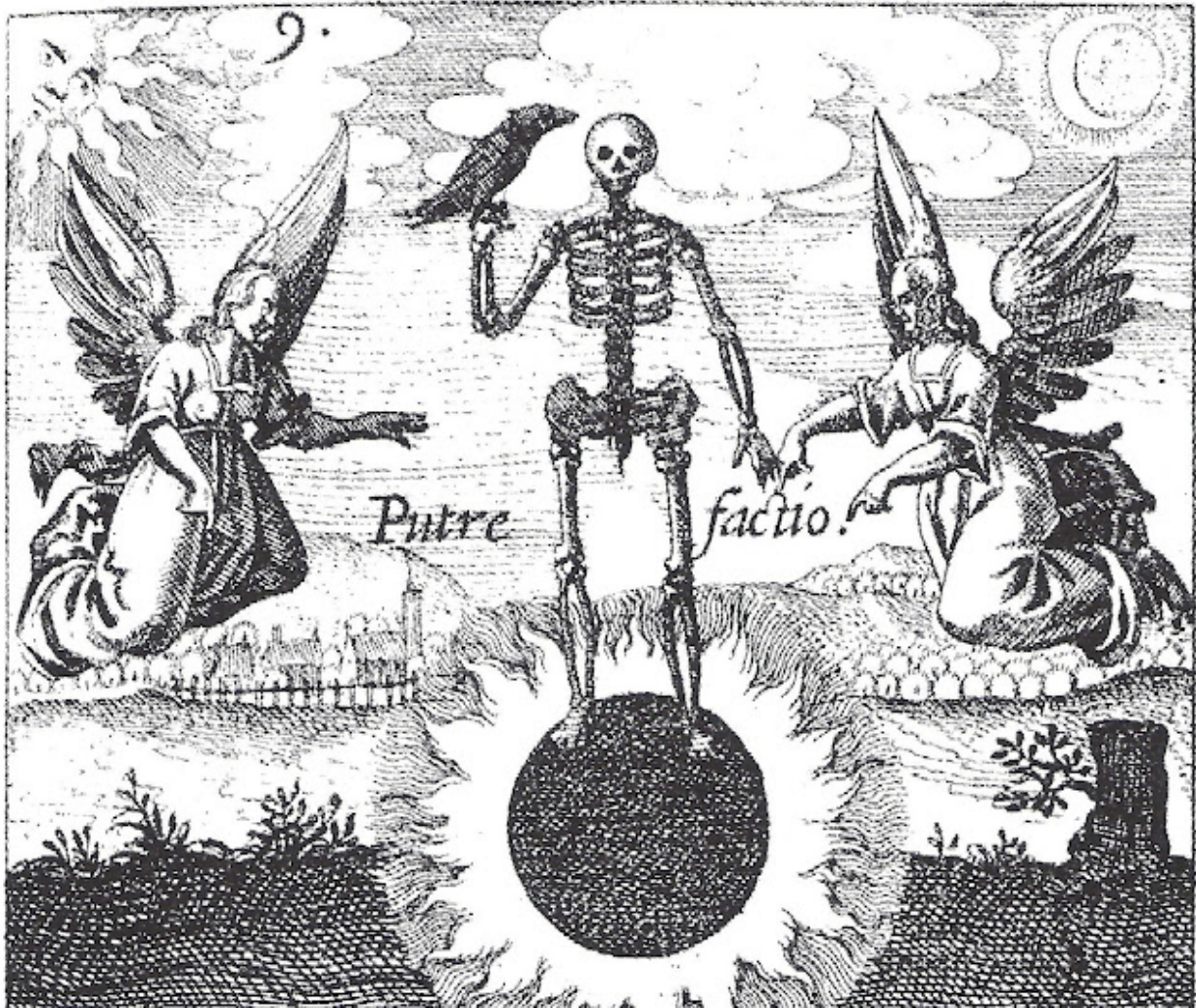
On the left, the protagonist who kneads the raw material, or *Materia Prima* in a basin like bread dough. On the right, an airtight vessel in which the work boils: a dragon biting its tail. This animal which resembles the ouroboros is both a representation of the archaic self but also a symbol of the untamed forces of nature. Indeed, as we have already seen (cf article **Lumen Naturae** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/11/lumen-naturae.html>]) the artist must accompany and complete what nature gives him.

The **eagle** represents the "Spirit" in the process of liberation. Note the **crow** on the head of the eagle which symbolizes mortification, a necessary step for the realization of the opus. Indeed, once released, the matter, ie the body, is regenerated, and, the spirit must be fixed ie reintegrated.

Johann Daniel Mylius (1585/1628) wrote in his "*Philosophia reformata*" in 1622:

*"Corruption plunges, implacable,
Our matter in death,
But the Spirit finds there*

*A new and joyful life.
 The black globe is its image,
 Like the dark raven,
 The standing human skeleton
 And the Spirit flying in the sky.
 If you don't rot the germs
 Sown in suitable soil,
 Your efforts will be in vain
 And your field will remain barren."*



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-ERem7lkuWaQ/T6Uu3n1o-2I/AAAAAAAABCQ/P_5ZHPtltUk/s1600/Mylius+-+Philosophia+reformata+-+1622+-+La+t%C3%AAte+du+Corbeau.jpeg]

Mylius - Philosophia reformata - 1622 - "The head of the Raven - The putrefaction"

Let's look at the picture above:

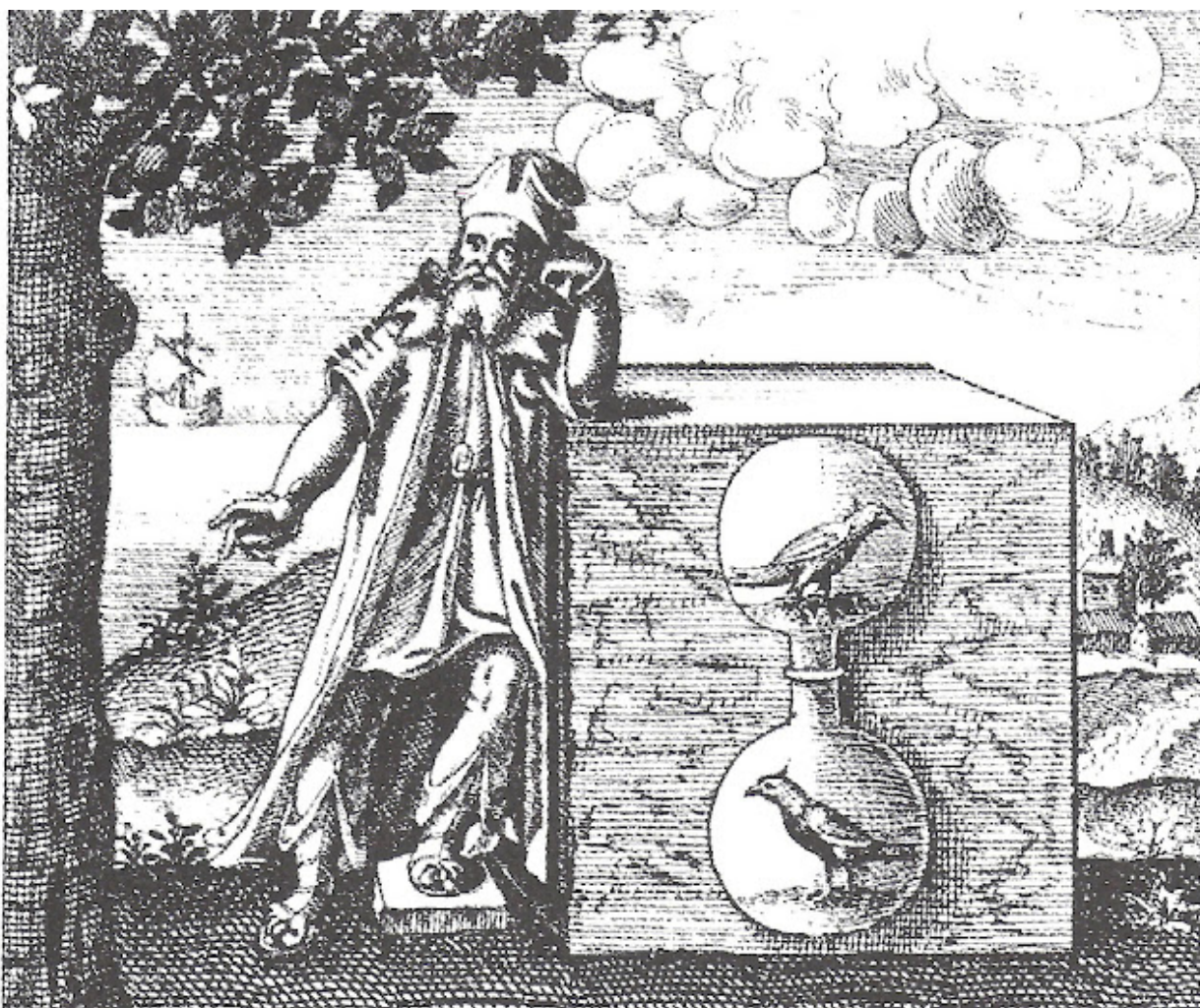
We see a skeleton on whose hand is placed a crow. It is the image of death which is the key to putrefaction. This is the first but one of the longest stages of the Opus: the Nigredo. This skeleton is standing on a sphere (*rotundum*) which represents the raw material (*prima materia*) . On either side two angels assist and help in the work. In the sky the Sun and the Moon which represent the principle of opposites (*Conscious / Unconscious, Masculine / Feminine, Light / Matter, Logos / Eros, Apollo / Diana, etc.*).

It is therefore a question of decapitating the head of the crow (*Caput corvi*), an operation during which the Pure Spirits are separated from the slag. In other words, the black sun (*Niger sol*) or *Prima Materia*, or even "dark tangible fire" separates the soul and the spirit from the body in putrefaction. Thus the opus loses its darkness

and gradually takes on the color white.

Johann Daniel Mylius (1585/1628) wrote in his *"Philosophia reformatata"* in 1622:

*"First capture two birds,
Put them in two earthen vessels
And make the two openings
Fit tightly together.
One of the birds flies away,
But the other delays its course
Finally neither
Shall reach the heights again.
Show great patience
And you will not be disappointed.
In the end the branches of the tree
Will bear ripe fruit for you."*



[<http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-Yle0IJ9uG6Y/T6UyAGtvEal/AAAAAAAABCo/fWVpaZIFDIU/s1600/Mylius+-+Philosophia+reformatata+-+1622+-+La+coction.jpeg>]

Mylius - Philosophia reformatata - 1622 - "The conjunction"

Let's look at the picture above:

We see an alchemist leaning on a table who has done his job and is waiting for the work to be done. We notice two birds including a crow in the alchemical vases. The table is a big cube which refers to the square and

therefore to the number four. Something must flow between the two birds... So here we have a representation of the patience that is necessary for the philosopher. **Johann Daniel Mylius** (1585/1628) wrote in his *"Philosophia reformata"* in 1622:

*"In the bed of love Gabricus
Unites with Beia his wife.
But she seizes him
And imprisons him in her womb.
They were two, and now
They form only one body,
So that their embrace is born
Rich wedding presents
The hen demands the rooster
Cynthia needs Phoebus
To get what she wants:
A large lineage."*



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*Mylius - Philosophia reformata - 1622 - "The conjunction - The bed of love"***Let's look at the picture above:**

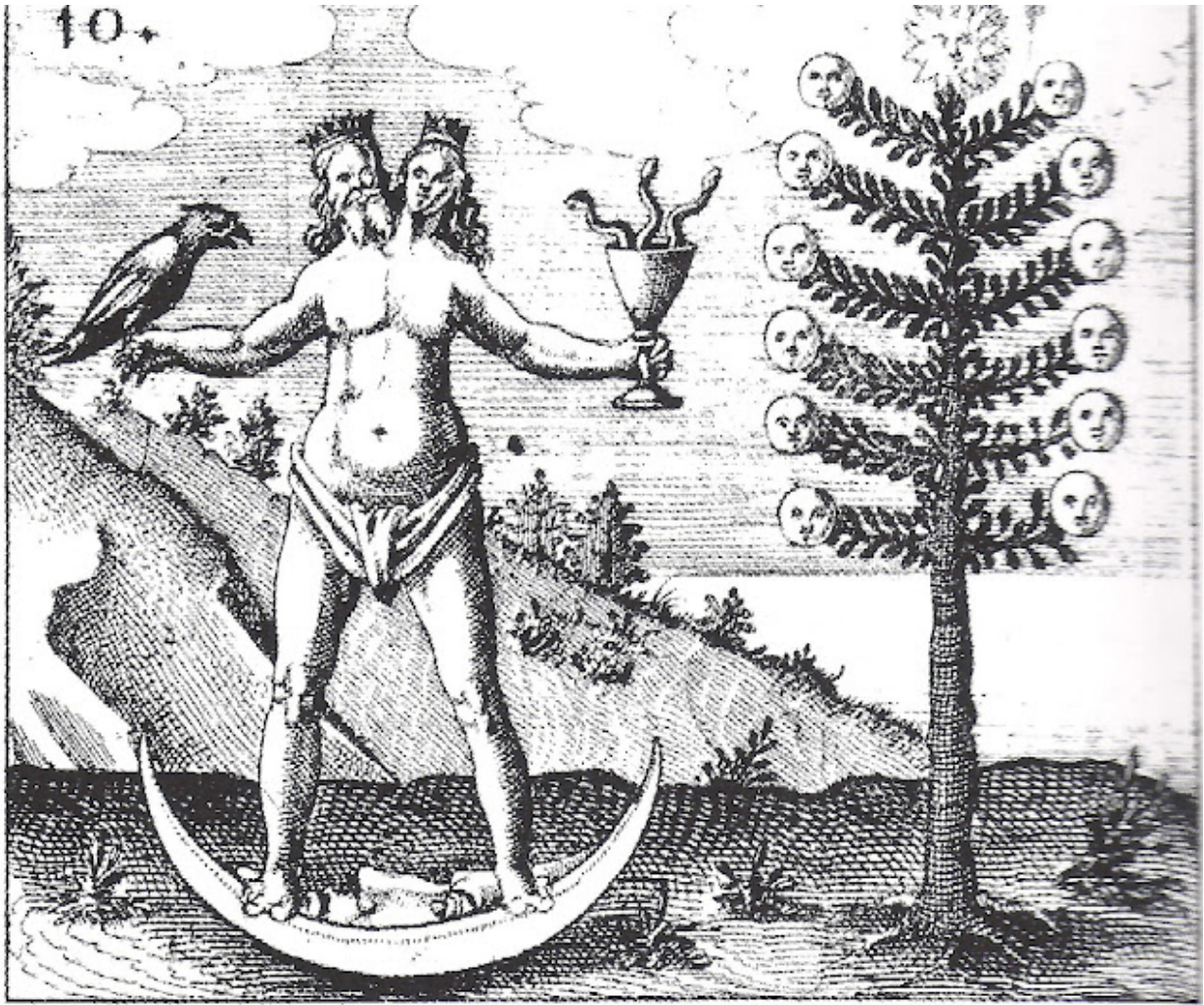
We see the Queen and the King in a bed of love. They were purified by fire and the dissolution of their bodies in the mercurial bath. Notice the delimiting veil that isolates their private space. (For more information on this important detail read the article: **Isolation / Insulation** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2010/12/isolement-isolation.html>]) This couple , because it is a human representation, symbolizes the principle of opposites or should I say complementarity arrived at a level close to consciousness. Notice on the right side, in an outer space, two crows which each follow the Sun or the Moon (Principles of opposites) They announce the phase of putrefaction which follows an innate and universal logic.

The Queen and the King communicate to each other in coupling each their own nature. That is to say that the Queen converts the King into his volatile nature and the King on his side transmits his property of fixity to the Queen.

The space on the left with the Queen and the King in the bed of love is in the unconscious or even introverted pole. The space on the right with the two crows following the Sun and the Moon is in the pole of consciousness or even extrovert. These two spaces evolve in parallel, one driving the other. CG Jung calls the communication between unconsciousness and consciousness the "function of transcendence".

Johann Daniel Mylius (1585/1628) wrote in his "*Philosophia reformata*" in 1622:

*"Here is the body bearing two heads.
Under his feet, the waxing moon;
In his left hand, three serpents;
On the right a bird lands.
Next to him stands a tree
With branches full of beautiful fruits.
Thanks to them, you can get
Treasures, innumerable goods.
But to achieve this you must
Know its root first.
The tree then will surely grow
To offer you its delicious fruits."*



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Mylius - Philosophia reformata - 1622 - "Germination - Lunar perfection"

Let's look at the picture above:

We see on the left a **Rebis**, that is to say an androgyne, a being half-woman half - man . **The male side holds a raven** in its hand , the female side holds a cup which contains **three serpents** .

On the left a tree with six branches at the ends of each of which is represented a **Moon** with a human figure. At the top of the tree a single **Sun**.

Behind: on the left a mountain and on the right a body of water.

The Rebis represents the union of opposites. Notice that he is standing with his feet on a crescent moon which indicates some mastery of chthonic forces.

The crow symbolizes the **Nigredo** .

The three heads of snakes represent *Salt* , *Sulfur* , and *Mercury* of the wise or quicksilver, that is to say the Body, the Soul and the Spirit.

The tree with twice six branches symbolizes the opus.

The six Moons symbolize the six metals transformed at the silver stage (Metal of Diana) The Sun represents the Gold of the philosophers. The six moons on each side also represent with the sun the seven operations of Opus.

Behind the mountain on the left symbolizes the introverted pole and the depths of the unconscious. On the right the sea represents the extrovert pole with the dangers that this can represent.

Thus the whole of this illustration represents the First Lunar Perfection obtained at the end of Putrefaction.

Johann Daniel Mylius (1585/1628) wrote in his *"Philosophia reformata"* in 1622:

*"An old man rests in silence.
Near him stands motionless
A black crow, his companion.
Both soul and spirit
Abandon his cold limbs
That he may thus be delivered
From the chastisement of the evil within him.
Having thus left his body,
They return to it all joyful,
And our Apollo is born
Of body, soul and spirit.*



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-GvXzZHRClmQ/T6UyaLVBH_I/AAAAAAAAABC0/IxEfP7f9Z_A/s1600/Mylius---Philosophia+reformata---1622---La+patience.jpeg]

Mylius - Philosophia reformata - 1622 - Patience

Let's look at the picture above:

A philosopher or alchemist sits and waits arms crossed for the natural light to guide him (*Lumen naturae*). Notice that he is in a protected space like a fault in the rock. It is **patience**, a virtue so necessary for our Art. In the sky the seven stars symbolize the seven operations that the great work requires. The dissolution phase, the result of which is darkness, is one of the operations that requires the most patience.

A **crow** at first seems to communicate to the follower.

Two angels assist the artist who watches us wisely.

Up in the sky, the wind blows to the left and the fire that springs up to the right.

(For a more in-depth study on nature, read the article: **Lumen Naturae** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/11/lumen-naturae.html>])

Johann Daniel Mylius (1585/1628) wrote in his "*Philosophia reformata*" in 1622:

*"Fierce enemy and fire Have ravaged the whole
City. The rustic crowd
of the people*

Has succumbed with its king . is to reunite her With the robust body of your king. And then all may see him Embrace a new life."



[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/--rVSI4DrtDI/T6UvI_4UQil/AAAAAAAAABCY/hCyyMe_W-9U/s1600/Mylius++Philosophia+reformata++1622+-

+L%27envol+des+esprits.jpeg]

Mylius - Philosophia reformata - 1622 - "The putrefaction - The flight of spirits"

Let's look at the picture above:

The dissolution has taken place, the work is in the throes of putrefaction. In the foreground, skeletons symbolize the death or dissolution of matter. A few crows stand on the skeletons and represent the Nigredo phase. The putrefaction of the raw material (materia prima) allows the flight of spirits. Matter releases a volatile essence which is represented here by the birds in the sky.



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[nPrsTp4JYw/UuzdENTiKwI/AAAAAAAAHPY/p6fhXYihCvw/s1600/Salomon+Trismosin+-+Splendor+Solis+-+10.jpeg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-nPrsTp4JYw/UuzdENTiKwI/AAAAAAAAHPY/p6fhXYihCvw/s1600/Salomon+Trismosin+-+Splendor+Solis+-+10.jpeg)]

Salomon Trismosin - "Splendor Solis" - illustration n°10

"In its midst grew a great tree with a silver trunk extending over all the places of the world. On its branches pierce many birds which all flew away at dawn and the head of the raven turned white. This tree produces many fruits..."

Let's look at the picture above:

We see a follower who climbs a ladder on a tree and instead of picking fruit, retrieves a golden branch which he hands to one of the two figures below.

These three characters are actually related. The adept at the top of the ladder is **Ascanius**. The two men at the foot of the tree are **Aeneas** and his father **Anchilus**. **Aeneas is the son** of Anchilus and Aphrodite. His name means "*copper*" in Latin (*Aeneas*). He is a Trojan chief. He had a son Ascanius.

Notice that Ascanius on the ladder gives a golden branch to Anchile (*so his grandfather*) who himself sent Aeneas another golden branch.

This branch transition is none other than the assurance of divine protection during the stage of putrefaction which passes through the purifying Fire of the Underworld. In Greek mythology, for example, the Trojan chiefs Aeneas, after his episode in North Africa and the death of Dido, is led by a sibyl into the kingdom of shadows where his destiny to found a new homeland is confirmed. will later erect the city of Rome. The Mistletoe, or "golden branch" ensures according to the tradition of being able to go and especially to go up from hell. This is why it is the plant associated with **Proserpine** (*Persephone in Greek*) daughter of **Ceres** (*Demeter in Greek*)

Notice the colors of the garments of the different characters: the black color of the adept's garment on the scale alludes to the alchemical phase of the **Nigredo** (*The Dark Work*) ; The white color of Anchile's mantle refers to the alchemical phase of **Albedo** (**The work in white**) The **red** color of Aeneas' mantle who is richly dressed refers to the alchemical phase of Rubedo (*The work in red*).

The ladder has seven rungs which correspond to the seven stages necessary for the realization of the Opus. Observe the golden crown at the foot of the tree, a symbol of divine power, which indicates its sovereignty. There is a reference here to one of the ten *Sephirot* of the Kabbalah Tree of Life.

In the branches of the plant a black bird with a white head pecks the fruits of the tree. They are golden fruits and it is the crow whose head has been whitened by the great Art of Hermes. Notice that thirteen birds just flew out of the tree. They represent the liberation of spirits from matter.

Solomon Trismosin thus points out and comforts us in our magisterium.

At the same time on the front of the illustration, **four women** are bathing in a pool fed from a golden fountain. They each wear necklaces of gold beads. These four women perfectly represent, if only by their number, the feminine (*4 is symbolically always feminine!*) Two other women on the right bring offerings to the bathers on cushions.

On either side of the illustration at the very bottom and behind the columns two men on each side observe and witness the scene. Upstairs a single man dressed in blue on the left (*probably the adept himself*) and three men including a king are on the right.

There are therefore three times four characters around the painting of the Tree of Life: Four bathers, two times two men behind the columns, and on the first floor a man and three people including a King.

To some extent these four characters can represent the four psychological functions.

For a more in-depth study on these functions read the article: **Four Functions** [<http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/04/quatre-fonctions.html>]

George Ripley writes: "*Give thanks to God that your work is begun, for in it you will have the true sign appearing to you in the dark, which is called the head or beak of the raven. Others call it ashes. of the tree of Hermes, and some call it a toad that is drunk from the earth; by which the Spirit is imprisoned, mortified and all infected with venom.*" (*"The Twelve Gates of Alchemy"* - From Calcination - Page 53)

Thanks for reading,
Good teacher !



[<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-qUITVPN5CAk/T6VfpE1jOal/AAAAAAAAABDo/3VevglHWAEo/s1600/Corbeau+5.jpg>]



[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-i_XGE5zq0vA/UL0KLB3RTcl/AAAAAAAAACbQ/IqOaEgNgbEk/s1600/Un+Corbeau.JPG]

Posted 6th May 2012 by [L'alchimiste](#)

5 Show comments



Anonymous July 18, 2014 at 07:23

Thank you for your work 💎💎

[Respond](#)



the alchemist November 9, 2014 at 06:03

But nothing, it's a pleasure.
Thank you Koré to you for your reading
Have a nice day!

[Respond](#)



Anonymous January 27, 2015 at 10:46 am

This comment has been removed by the author.

[Respond](#)



Anonymous January 27, 2015 at 10:47 am

Thank you very much for this light!
Congratulations to you

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[Answers](#)



the alchemist January 31, 2015 at 08:02

You're welcome, it's a pleasure
Thank you!

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